

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 280 823

SP 028 717

AUTHOR Minier, Judith E.
TITLE Inservice Education for Professors: A Second Look at Classroom Management.
PUB DATE Nov 85
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual National Conference of the National Council of States on Inservice Education (10th, Denver, CO, November 22-26, 1985).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavior Problems; *Classroom Techniques; Elementary Education; Higher Education; *Inservice Teacher Education; *Teacher Educators; Teacher Effectiveness; *Teaching Experience; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

Teacher educators should get back to the world of students and find out what works and what doesn't in the classroom to ensure that they don't teach from an "ivory tower." Continuous teaching experience is particularly needed by teacher educators in the areas of discipline, classroom management, teaching effectiveness, misbehavior, and punishment. This paper is divided into the following categories of study and approaches to classroom management: (1) Do's and don'ts about classroom management; (2) Precepts about classroom management; (3) Roles that can help teachers to teach more effectively; (4) Recognizing goals of misbehavior; (5) Myths about the values of punishment; and (6) Behavior management practices. Some suggested references for ideas on classroom management are offered. (CB)

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INSERVICE EDUCATION FOR PROFESSORS: A SECOND
LOOK AT CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Judith E. Minier

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INSERVICE EDUCATION FOR PROFESSORS: A SECOND
LOOK AT CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Since children are what elementary education is all about it is time for college faculty to get back into the world of students in elementary classrooms and find out what works and what doesn't. The "ivory tower" is no longer acceptable in this practical age of accountability and reform. With the exception of a few faculty who supervise student teachers and those who develop practica in their coursework, most teacher education faculty have little or no direct contact with public classrooms. The gap must be bridged and there are several ways it can be done. The particular example in this article reports on the way one faculty returned to the classroom after an eleven-year "absence;" (those 11 years having been spent in higher education, supervising student teachers, interns, conducting inservice activities, directing alternative education programs, but not having day to day responsibility for the instruction and development of children). By accepting a position at a university lab school which included teaching reading and math to first through fourth graders, one more professor returned to reality and practicality.

One of the most difficult and controversial aspects of teaching still tends to be the "global topic" known as classroom management. What is classroom management? Is it discipline? Is it grouping? Is it behavior management? Is it teacher organization and creativity? Is it effective teaching? Is it transitional activities? Is it keeping order? The answer to these

questions is yes; much more besides is imbued in the concept of classroom management. This professor relearned what is involved in maintaining 20+ youngsters on a daily basis in an academically rigorous program. This paper will outline some classroom management practices, concerns, suggestions encountered during the first half of the school year.

While various authorities in the field of classroom management have written voraciously on the topic there are still a few tips for practioners to keep in mind as one studies the works of the "masters." (Please see the reading list offered at the conclusion of this article for references related to ideas shared.) The remainder of this paper is divided into these general categories of study and approaches to classroom management:

- Dos and don'ts about discipline
- Precepts about classroom management
- Rules that can help to teach more effectively
- Recognizing goals of misbehavior
- Myths about the values of punishment
- Behavior management practices

Some Do's and Don'ts About Discipline

1. Recognize that behavior must be seen in a proper perspective. Avoid making serious problems out of lesser "crimes." Is what is happening dangerous or just bothersome to the teacher's notion of what is appropriate?

2. Children must be allowed to take control of their own behavior in responsible ways, even if it is "easier" for the teacher to manage the student. Students must assume responsibility for their own learning and actions. Teachers must cooperatively plan for future goals and appropriate behavior with the student's input and in some cases, negotiation.

3. Build relationships with children on respect and trust; give children more than one "chance" as they are developing a sense of what is right and wrong. Let children know they can trust you by getting to know them as thoroughly as possible, i.e., through personal journals, interest inventories, and private conversations done on a regular basis, not just when the child has a problem.

4. Do away with any double standards you may have in your classroom. Rules that children must follow should also be maintained by the teacher.

5. Avoid being preoccupied with your own authority over students. Children sense insecurity and will attack insecurity and further aggravate it. Dictatorships also create rebellions and revolutions.

Precepts About Classroom Management

1. Let your students know that you really like them; transmit affection even when you must reprimand their behavior. It is easy to like well-behaved children so cultivate an interest and affection for the "less-wanted."

2. Keep students actively involved in their own learning -- lectures are appearing even in primary grades and are consequently boring and deadening to young children. When students are busy and interested in the lesson there will be far fewer problems.

3. Know yourself and your limitations and values and let the students in on these ideas. Monitor your own problems so that they do not get in the way of your teaching. Also display an honest feeling for liking your work. If you don't like it, then change jobs!

4. Make use of anecdotal records for students who seem to have persistent with problems. A recipe card box at the corner of your desk or a notebook to be filled in after school are both valuable for record-keeping for recurring behavior. Be sure to date incidents in order to monitor activities more accurately.

Rules That Can Help To Teach More Effectively

All classrooms operate by rules, written or unwritten. And yet some run more smoothly than others, which may be due to the fact that some teachers have realized these considerations as they develop rules for their classrooms.

1. A rule should be stated in such a way that students can understand the behavior that is expected. If this does not occur, then often what happens is that students will only carry out half of the task or do a sloppy job of it. This can be

monitored by having the teacher thoroughly go over the stated rule and model what is expected. For younger children this may mean going over the rule in very detailed fashion before it will be possible to just give a few key words to the child. Don't assume impudence if the child does not carry out the order; perhaps he/she felt they had done the job correctly.

2. Make only rules that are reasonable. Rules are reasonable when they do not go against human or normal behavior of children. Rules also are reasonable if they are necessary, if children are able to carry out the task, or if it is reasonable to enforce the rule.

3. Rules must be possible to enforce. Often teachers make demands of children which are impossible to monitor or enforce. There is little reason to develop such rules; it is a waste of time and energy to try to follow up unenforceable behavior.

Recognizing the Goals of Misbehavior

Dreikurs, et al, (1982) identify four goals of misbehavior which children may adopt in their desire to "belong." These authorities further identify the fact that every action of a child has a purpose. Many psychologists contend that all behavior is goal-directed and thus can be monitored, changed or modified. Dreikurs states that the four primary goals include:

1. Attention getting mechanisms: behavior which gains attention, gets recognition, gets services to keep others busy, or make other people feel sorry for the doer.

2. Power seeking: to prove power and to defeat the control of adults.

3. Revenge seeking: to get even with others around the child or to hurt those who are "hurting" the child.

4. Assumed or real disability: to display deficiency or inadequacy in order to be left alone.

Teacher behaviors can either contribute to the continuance of these behaviors or counteract them with nonpunitive measures. Dreikurs offers many strategies to offset the enactment of these goals -- all without the use of punishment. Understanding a child's goal as misbehavior occurs in the first step in dealing with the child's redirecting of goals and producing new behaviors.

The Myth of the Value of Punishment

Combs (1979) discusses many "myths" which are ensconced in beliefs about education today. He attacks many such erroneous precepts including one about the notion that punishment is useful and effective in managing behavior of students. He defines punishment as: "a device for controlling people through the manipulation of external forces." (p. 130) Combs further states that punishment is limited in its effectiveness because: " (1) Punishment teaches people what not to do; (2) Punishment teaches highly specific behaviors; and (3) Punishment's effects are temporary." (p. 130) The side effects of punishment are

enormous and often spread from the behavior to the behavior which can further negate feelings of self-worth. Punishment also generates negative responses in the child and further will do little to internalize appropriate positive responses in a disciplined child.

Behavior Management (Modification) Practices

Several behavior modification practices have proven helpful in the management of student's inappropriate behavior. While this option may not be a first choice of educators, there is little doubt of the effectiveness managing behavior through the use of any number of devices designed to monitor and ultimately change behavior. A Behavior-Log form (fig. 1) is useful if the teacher is attempting to maintain records of a child's deeds and also allows for recording interventions as well; this form or a modified one is useful in determining baseline data about behavior. A time-out log (fig. 2) is helpful in cases where a child needs to be removed from a particular setting. This device is intended to track the behavior during the time-out in order to manage or change the undesirable behavior. Both of these devices put the burden on the teacher and are thus not necessarily helpful if the goal is to internalize a child's behavior or to develop good "self-discipline." A third device, a contract, is intended more for the use of the teacher who wants to put the onus on the child for managing his/her own behavior. (fig. 3) A contract means that the child makes a commitment to perform in a

certain way; this particular contract calls for "rewards" from the teacher, but this is not necessarily desirable or needed.

The preceding ideas may not be new or even novel, but may be useful in the successful management of elementary classrooms. This professor will continue to experiment and synthesize practices related to approaches to discipline. Since good classroom management and good self-discipline are a developmental process, don't be discouraged if a procedure doesn't work the first time; some effects may occur only after a considerable period of time. That is good to keep in mind whether you are an experienced teacher or a professor returning to the classroom!

SOME SUGGESTED REFERENCES FOR IDEAS ON CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

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ANECDOTAL RECORDS
(Behavior Log Form)

Target Behavior _____
Child's Name _____
Teacher / Observer _____

1. Behavior to be modified: _____

2. Baseline data _____

3. Incidence recorded _____

Actions taken:

Teachers / Child / Others

Results

Interventions

Results

COMMENTS:

Figure 1

Date _____

Child's Name _____

Behavior Needing Change

Time Out Behavior

Results (Post Assessment Analysis

Time In

Time Out

14

CONTRACT

_____ and _____ have
Child Teacher

made this decision about the child's activities. The child and teacher will
abide by these terms:

Child _____

Teacher _____

Both parties will abide by the agreement made on this paper.

Child's Signature _____

Teacher's Signature _____

Date begun _____

Date ended _____

Figure 3